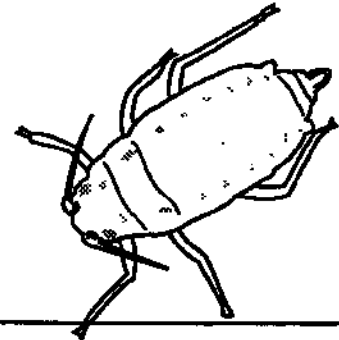


****ATTENTION****

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WILDLIFE, THE RUSSIAN WHEAT APHID AND INSECTICIDES

An infestation of the Russian wheat aphid that started in Texas in 1986 has now become a serious concern for Washington grain growers. This exotic pest has spread throughout most western wheat growing states and can cause significant damage to grain crops. Unfortunately, the problem is expected to continue for several years in Washington.

To combat this pest, there may be a significant increase in the use of insecticides in eastern Washington grain country during the spring and fall. This increased use of insecticides raises concerns for the wildlife that live in these areas.

What pesticides are used on Russian wheat aphid?

At this point, nothing has been found to eliminate the Russian wheat aphid. There are, however, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered organophosphate insecticides that are effective in controlling the aphid. The most commonly used in Washington are disulfoton (DI-SYSTON®) and dimethoate (CYGON®).

How is wildlife affected?

Since these pesticides inhibit enzymes necessary for proper nerve function there is cause for concern for wild animals that, unlike domestic animals, cannot be kept out of sprayed fields.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) reported a die-off of sage grouse in Idaho after they consumed dimethoate-treated alfalfa. No indications of wildlife dying from the *correct* use of disulfoton have been reported (although *incorrect* use did result in a Canada goose die-off in Idaho).

The indirect effects on wildlife from increased, extended use of these insecticides are unknown at this time. Spraying during the nesting season could reduce the number of insects available to young birds and other wildlife. Since organophosphate insecticides are neurotoxins there is concern that wildlife behavior could be affected to the point of reducing reproductive success and increasing susceptibility to predators and disease.

To learn more about these potential effects, Washington

Department of Wildlife (WDW) and USFWS biologists will be monitoring sprayed fields to collect any affected wildlife for analysis.

How can grain growers help wildlife?

1. Spray only when absolutely necessary. Contact local agriculture extension agents for help in determining when pesticide use is warranted.

2. Do not spray Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands and other non-crop land that may serve as wildlife habitat areas. Wildlife often occupy the edge of these areas, so avoid spraying field margins adjacent to these areas, if possible.

3. Avoid spraying during the peak bird nesting time, from mid-May through June, if possible.

4. Follow the label directions when applying insecticides. Incorrect application may result in not only a wildlife die-off, but human health hazards and the eventual loss of a registered pesticide for legal use.

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WILDLIFE, THE RUSSIAN WHEAT APHID AND INSECTICIDES

What should hunters and other wildlife enthusiasts do?

When you contact a land-owner for permission to use private land, ask about use of insecticides and avoid walking fields that have been recently sprayed (re-entry times vary between 24 to 96 hours depending on the insecticide.) There is no information on the effects of these insecticides on dogs (that might be used for hunting), but to be safe, avoid running your dog in recently-sprayed fields.

Washington Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS) indicates "that eating wild game which has grazed in treated fields does not appear to be hazardous if the animal appeared physically healthy before being killed."

If you come across indications of a wildlife die-off which you suspect is tied to an insecticide, please notify your local WDW officials. (See the following list for addresses and telephone numbers.) They will take the necessary steps to verify the cause of death and recommend actions to prevent further wildlife losses.

The Washington Department of Wildlife will provide equal opportunities to all potential and existing employees without regard to race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability, or Vietnam Era Veteran's status. The department receives Federal Aid for fish and wildlife restoration.

The department is subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin or handicap. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any department program, activity, or facility, or if you want further information about Title VI or Section 504, write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240, or Washington Department of Wildlife, 600 Capitol Way N, Olympia, WA 98501-1091.

Department of Wildlife Offices

Olympia Office (206) 753-5700
600 Capitol Way N
Olympia, WA 98501-1091

Region 1 (509) 456-4082
North 8702 Division Street
Spokane, WA 99218

Region 2 (509) 754-4624
1540 Alder St. NW
Ephrata, WA 98823

Region 3 (509) 575-2740
2802 Fruitvale Boulevard
Yakima, WA 98902

Wenatchee Office
(509) 662-0452
3860 Chelan Highway
Wenatchee, WA 98801

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The following can be contacted to provide additional information about health effects of pesticides, eating wild game, registration and usage of pesticides and effects of pesticides upon the environment.

Washington Department of Social and Health Services
Toxic Substances Section
Mail Stop LD-11
Olympia, WA 98504
(206) 586-4501

Washington Department of Ecology
Hazardous Substances
Information Hotline
Mail Stop PV-11
Olympia, WA 98504
Toll Free Hotline:
1-800-633-7585

Washington Department of Labor and Industries
Division of Industrial Safety and Health
805 Plum Street
Mail Stop HC-402
Olympia, WA 98504
Toll Free Hotline:
1-800-423-7233

Washington Department of Agriculture
Chemical and Plant Services
Mail Stop AX-41
Olympia, WA 98504
(206) 753-5064

Washington State University Cooperative Extension
listed in the telephone book under "County Offices."